



Office of the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1670

1 June 04

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJCOM COMMAND CHIEFS

FROM: AF/CCC


SUBJECT: Professional Military Associations

As the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, I have the great privilege to travel throughout our Air Force and see our Airmen in action, and to listen to their concerns on a variety of issues. I take very seriously my responsibility to represent them and their concerns to senior Air Force and Department of Defense leaders, and our nation's leaders in government.

When I speak with Airmen, I also encourage them to do their part in fostering improvements in our force through their actions and leadership. One of the ways to do that is through the support of professional military associations such as the Air Force Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, and the Noncommissioned Officers Association. These and other organizations strengthen our military by lobbying Congress for initiatives important to our Airmen and their families, and by fostering public support for our men and women in uniform through education.

Recently, General Jumper sent a fact sheet to commanders highlighting the type of support that can be provided to Professional Military Associations. I've attached the fact sheet for your use and distribution to other senior enlisted leaders in your commands as you encourage support for the organizations that ultimately help us care for our dedicated Airmen and their families.

Thanks in advance for your help in distributing the information, and for all you do for our Air Force everyday.


GERALD R. MURRAY
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS

While the Air Force cannot endorse or sanction professional military associations (PMAs) under the Joint Ethics Regulation (JER) (DoD 5500.7-R), commanders can provide other types of support. JER 3-209.

PMAs include such organizations as the Air Force Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, the Military Officers of America Association, the Reserve Officer's Association, and other similar organizations that exist to promote the development of military professionals.

The following information highlights the support that can be provided to PMAs. This fact sheet is not a substitute for legal guidance. Decisions on requests from PMAs should be made on a case-by-case basis with the assistance of the staff judge advocate.

Distribution of PMA Information

- Commanders can publish news items on PMAs, including current activities and membership drives. Note, however, that similar groups merit similar treatment – a commander cannot pick and choose which PMAs to publicize. JER 3-208.
- Commanders can issue informative memos on the existence of PMAs and can announce their membership/fundraising drives. Pursuant to DoD/GC guidance, when referring to membership/fundraising activities, commanders need to remain neutral and detached. Informative memos should avoid the use of certain words (including “endorse,” “encourage,” “recommend,” and “urge”). DoD/GC Memo, *Endorsement vs. Information Memoranda*, 28 May 96.
- Commanders can issue official letters thanking PMAs for support of the Air Force community. These letters can be disseminated through official channels. See SECDEF Memo, *DoD Support of the Armed Services YMCA*, 8 May 97.
- Commanders can permit PMAs to post notices of special events on bulletin boards and television or radio programs in the same way other organizational information is disseminated. However, unless the base has an E-mail bulletin board set up for non-official postings, commanders should avoid using official E-mail systems to disseminate information on PMA or other private organization activities. JER 2-301.a. (2)(e); AFI 33-119, *E-Mail Management and Use*, para. 3.3.2.5.
- Commanders can permit PMAs to set out membership applications, leaflets, or flyers in a common area of the base, as long as similar groups are given the same privilege. JER 3-211.a.
- Commanders can encourage members to participate in PMAs in general.
- When publicizing PMA membership drives, the commander can publicize the name of the AF member who has *volunteered* to be a point of contact for new members. The commander may not, however, appoint a member to do this, nor may the member act as a PMA representative in an official capacity.
JER 3-210.

Support for PMA Activities

- Commanders can appoint an official liaison to act as a base representative to the local PMA chapter. The liaison performs official duties in representing AF interests to the PMA. The liaison cannot become involved in PMA management. JER 3-201.a.
- Commanders can support PMA breakfasts, luncheons, and dinners by publicizing these events and providing speakers or panel members. The JER also allows commanders to allow AF members and employees excused absences for "reasonable periods of time" to voluntarily attend these types of activities. JER 3-211; 3-300.b.
- Commanders may permit members and employees to use government equipment and administrative support to prepare papers to be presented at a PMA event (i.e., conferences, seminars, or similar events) if: (1) the paper is related to the employee's official duties, (2) the AF can derive some benefit from such participation, and (3) the support does not interfere with official duties. JER 3-300.b.
- Commanders can provide logistical support of PMA-sponsored events, such as conferences and seminars (except for fundraising and membership drives) if: (1) the support does not interfere with official duties; (2) legitimate AF interests are served; (3) it is appropriate to associate the AF with the event; (4) the event is of interest to the AF; (5) the AF is able and willing to provide the same support to similar events; (6) the support is not prohibited by other statutes; and (7) no admission fee (beyond covering reasonable costs) is charged. JER 3-211.a.
- Commanders can provide limited logistical support for PMA-sponsored charitable fundraisers when items (1) through (6), above, are met and the fundraiser will take place away from the Federal workplace. JER 3-211.b.
- Commanders can lead by example by joining one or several PMAs in their personal capacity. JER 3-300.